

Claims

It is claimed:

1. A method for changing an appearance of a mechanical device displayed on a gaming machine, the method comprising:
 - receiving a wager to play a base wagering game that utilizes the mechanical device;
 - detecting an indication to play a special feature game that utilizes the mechanical device; and
 - in response to detecting the indication, changing an appearance of the mechanical device.
2. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical device of claim 1, wherein the base wagering game is selected from the group consisting of mechanical slots, video slots, video poker, video blackjack, video keno and video bingo.
3. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical device of claim 1, wherein the special feature game comprises a bonus game.
4. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical device of claim 1, wherein the special feature game comprises a secondary game requiring an additional wager.
5. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical device of claim 1, wherein changing the appearance comprises illuminating an illumination source of the gaming machine.
6. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical device of claim 5, wherein the illumination source is selected from the group consisting of black-light,

colored light emitting diodes, white light emitting diodes, organic light emitting diodes, incandescent bulbs, colored film in conjunction with incandescent bulbs and colored film in conjunction with light emitting diodes.

7. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical device of claim 1, wherein changing the appearance comprises overlaying a video image upon the mechanical device.

8. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical device of claim 1, wherein the mechanical device comprises a plurality of mechanical spinning reels.

9. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical device of claim 1, wherein the mechanical device comprises mechanical dice.

10. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical device of claim 1, wherein the mechanical device comprises a wheel.

11. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical device of claim 1, wherein the indication is based on a selection by a player.

12. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical device of claim 1, wherein the indication is based on a triggering event occurring during base wagering game play.

13. A method for changing an appearance of a plurality of mechanical reels on a gaming machine, the method comprising:

receiving a wager to play a slot game that utilizes the plurality of mechanical reels;

detecting a first indication to play a bonus game that utilizes the plurality of mechanical reels;

in response to detecting the first indication, changing a color of the plurality of mechanical spinning reels;

detecting a second indication to terminate play of the bonus game; and

in response to detecting the second indication, restoring the color to the plurality of mechanical spinning reels.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein changing the color comprises illuminating an illumination source of the gaming machine.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the illumination source is selected from the group consisting of black-light, colored light emitting diodes, white light emitting diodes, organic light emitting diodes, incandescent bulbs, colored film in conjunction with incandescent bulbs and colored film in conjunction with light emitting diodes.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein restoring the color comprises de-illuminating the illumination source.

17. The method of claim 13, wherein changing the color comprises overlaying a video image upon the plurality of mechanical spinning reels.

18. The method of claim 13, wherein the first and second indication are based on a selection by a player.

19. The method of claim 13, wherein the first indication is based on a triggering event occurring during slot game play.

20. A gaming machine comprising:

a value input device;

a displayed mechanical device operable during both a base game and a special feature game;

an illumination source adapted to illuminate the displayed mechanical device;
and

a controller operatively coupled to the value input device, the displayed mechanical device and the illumination source, the controller comprising a processor and a memory coupled to the processor, the controller being programmed to

- allow a player to make a wager to play the base game,
- detect a first indication to play the special feature game, and
- in response to detecting the first indication, illuminate the illumination source to change an appearance of the displayed mechanical device.

21. The gaming machine of claim 20, wherein the controller is further programmed to

- detect a second indication to terminate the special feature game, and
- in response to detecting the second indication, de-illuminate the illumination source to restore the appearance of the displayed mechanical device.

22. The gaming machine of claim 20, wherein the illumination source is selected from the group consisting of black-light, colored light emitting diodes, white light emitting diodes, organic light emitting diodes, incandescent bulbs, colored film in conjunction with incandescent bulbs and colored film in conjunction with light emitting diodes.

23. The gaming machine of claim 20, wherein the change to the appearance of the displayed mechanical device comprises a color change to the displayed mechanical device.

24. The gaming machine of claim 20, wherein the base game is selected from the group consisting of mechanical slots, video slots, video poker, video blackjack, video keno and video bingo.

25. The gaming machine of claim 20, wherein the special feature game comprises a bonus game.

26. The gaming machine of claim 20, wherein the special feature game comprises a secondary game requiring an additional wager.

27. The gaming machine of claim 20, wherein the displayed mechanical device comprises a plurality of mechanical spinning reels.

28. The gaming machine of claim 20, wherein the displayed mechanical device comprises mechanical dice.

29. The gaming machine of claim 20, wherein the displayed mechanical device comprises a mechanical wheel.

30. A method for changing an appearance of a mechanical device displayed on a gaming machine, the method comprising:

receiving a wager to play a base game;

displaying a base game outcome with the mechanical device;

detecting an indication to play a special feature game;

in response to detecting the indication, changing an appearance of the mechanical device; and

displaying a special feature game outcome with the mechanical device.

31. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical device of claim 30, wherein the mechanical device includes a plurality of mechanical spinning reels that are rotated and stopped to place symbols on the reels in visual association with a display area.